NUMB. XXVIII.

The SPECTATOR.

Neque ſemper arcum
Tendit Apollo. Hor.

Monday, April 2. 1711.

I ſhall here preſent my Reader with a Letter from a Projector, concerning a new Office which he thinks may very much contribute to the Embelliſhment of the City, and to the driving Barbarity out of our Streets. It is as follows.

SIR,

'Obſerving that you have Thoughts of creating 'certain Officers under you, for the Inſpection of ſeveral petty Enormities which you your ſelf cannot attend to; and finding daily Abſurdities hung out upon the Sign-Poſts of this City, to the great Scandal of Foreigners, as well as thoſe of our own Country, who are curious Spectators of the ſame: I do humbly propoſe, that you would be pleaſed to make me your Superintendant of all ſuch Figures and Devices as are or ſhall be made uſe of on this Occaſion; with full Powers to rectify or expunge whatever I ſhall find irregular or defective. For want of ſuch an Officer, there is nothing like found Literature and good Senſe to be met with in thoſe Objects, that are every where thruſting themſelves out to the Eye, and endeavouring to become viſible. Our Streets are filled with blue Boars, black Swans, and red Lions; not to mention flying Pigs, and Hogs in Armour, with many other Creatures more extraordinary than any in the Deſarts of *Africk*. Strange! that one who has all the Birds and Beaſts in Nature to chuſe out of, ſhould live at the Sign of an *Ens Rationis!*

'My firſt Taſk therefore ſhould be, like that of *Hercules*, to clear the City from Monſters. In the ſecond Place I would forbid, that Creatures of jarring and incongruous Natures ſhould be joined together in the ſame Sign; ſuch as the Bell and the Neats-Tongue, the Dog and Gridiron. The Fox and Gooſe may be ſuppoſed to have met, but what has the Fox and the Seven Stars to do together? and when did the Sheep and Dolphin ever meet, except upon a Sign-Poſt? As for the Cat and Fiddle, there is a Conceit in it, and therefore I do not intend that any thing I have here ſaid ſhould affect it. I muſt however obſerve to you upon this Subject, that it is uſual for a young Tradeſman, at his firſt ſetting up, to add to his own Sign that of the Maſter whom he ſerv'd; as the Huſband after Marriage, gives a Place to his Miſtreſs's Arms in his own Coat. This I take to have given Riſe to many of thoſe Abſurdities which are committed over our Heads, and, as I am inform'd, firſt occaſion'd the three Nuns and a Hare, which we ſee ſo frequently joined together.* I would therefore eſtabliſh certain Rules, for the determining how far one Tradeſmen may *give* the Sign of another, and in what Caſes he may be allowed to quarter it with his own.

'In the third Place, I would enjoin every Shop to make uſe of a Sign which bears ſome Affinity to the Wares in which it deals. What can be more inconſiſtent, than to ſee a Bawd at the Sign of the Angel, or a Taylor at the Lion? A Cook ſhould not live at the Boot, nor a Shoemaker at the roaſted Pig; and yet for want of this Regulation, I have ſeen a Goat ſet up before the Door of a Perfumer, and the French King's Head at a Sword-Cutler's.

'An ingenious Foreigner obſerves, that ſeveral of thoſe Gentlemen who value themſelves upon their Families, and overlook ſuch as are bred to Trade, bear the Tools of their Forefathers in their Coats of Arms. I will not examine how true this is in Fact: But though it may not be neceſſary for Poſterity thus to ſet up the Sign of their Fore-fathers; I think it highly proper for thoſe who actually profeſs the Trade, to ſhow ſome ſuch Marks of it before their Doors.

'When the Name gives an Occaſion for an ingenious Sign-poſt, I would likewiſe adviſe the Owner to take that Opportunity of letting the World know who he is. It would have been ridiculous for the ingenious Mrs. *Salmon* to have lived at the Sign of the Trout; for which Reaſon ſhe has erected before her Houſe, the Figure of the Fiſh that is her Name-ſake. Mr. *Bell* has likewiſe diſtinguiſh'd himſelf by a Device of the ſame Nature:

ture: And here, Sir, I must beg Leave to observe to you, that this particular Figure of a Bell, has given Occasion to several Pieces of Wit in this Kind. A Man of your Reading, must know that *Abel Drugger* gain'd great Applause by it in the Time of *Ben: Johnson*. Our Apocryphal Heathen God, is also represented by this Figure; which in Conjunction with the Dragon, make a very handsome Picture in several of our Streets. As for the Bell-Savage, which is the Sign of a savage Man standing by a Bell, I was formerly very much puzzled upon the Conceit of it, till I accidentally fell into the reading of an old Romance translated out of the French; which gives an Account of a very beautiful Woman who was found in a Wilderness, and is called in the French *la belle Sauvage*; and is every where translated by our Countrymen the Bell-Savage. This Piece of Philology will, I hope, convince you that I have made Sign-posts my Study, and consequently qualified my self for the Employment which I solicit at your Hands. But before I conclude my Letter, I must communicate to you another Remark which I have made upon the Subject with which I am now entertaining you, namely, that I can give a shrewd Guess at the Humour of the Inhabitant by the Sign that hangs before his Door. A surly cholerick Fellow, generally makes Choice of a Bear; as Men of milder Dispositions, frequently live at the Lamb. Seeing a Punch-Bowl painted upon a Sign near *Charing-Cross*, and very curiously garnished, with a couple of Angels hovering over it and squeezing a Lemmon into it, I had the Curiosity to ask after the Master of the House, and found upon Enquiry, as I had ghessed by the little *Agremens* upon his Sign, that he was a Frenchman. I know, Sir, it is not requisite for me to enlarge upon these Hints to a Gentleman of your great Abilities; so humbly recommending my self to your Favour and Patronage,

I remain. &c.

I shall add to the foregoing Letter, another which came to me by the same Penny-Post.

From my own Apartment near Charing-Cross.

Honoured Sir,

HAving heard that this Nation is a great Encourager of Ingenuity, I have brought with me a Rope-dancer that was caught in one of the Woods belonging to the Great *Mogul*. He is by Birth a Monkey; but swings upon a Rope, takes a Pipe of Tobacco, and drinks a Glass of Ale, like any reasonable Creature. He gives great Satisfaction to the Quality; and if they will make a Subscription for him, I will send for a Brother of his out of *Holland* that is a very good Tumbler, and also for another of the same Family whom I design for my Merry-Andrew, as being an excellent Mimick, and the greatest Drole in the Country where he now is. I hope to have this Entertainment in a Readiness for the next Winter; and doubt not but it will please more than the Opera or Puppet-Show. I will not say that a Monkey is a better Man than some of the Opera Heroes; but certainly he is a better Representative of a Man, than the most artificial Composition of Wood and Wire. If you will be pleased to give me a good Word in your Paper, you shall be every Night a Spectator at my Show for nothing.

I am, &c.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Near the Windmill in Hampstead is a good Boarding-School; where young Gentlewom n may be boarded, and taught English, French, Dancing, Musick, and all Sorts of Needle-work.

The famous Water Theatre of the late ingenious Mr. Winstanly will be open'd this Easter Monday, being the second Day of April; and will be shown for six Days during the Holyday Week, at 5 a Clock in the Evening for the Benefit of his Widow. With several new Additions never shown before. It is at the lower End of Pickadilly, and is known by the Wind-mill on the Top of it. Boxes 2s. 6d: Pit 1s. 6d. first Gallery 1s. upper Gallery 6d.

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